

Guwaadzi Hauba;

My name is Sara Marie Ortiz, Itsaah'tahneh', child and mother, of the Acoma Pueblo People, the Haaku'meh' Hanoh, a full citizen of both my sovereign self-determining Tribal nation, and also a citizen of the United States of America.

I am a beneficiary of the Voluntary Fund and thank the board of trustees with my whole heart for making my participation possible. I am a member representative of the NGO, the Indigenous World Association, and also have come to you today on behalf of the Indigenous students, staff, faculty, and alumni of one of the only institutions of Indigenous higher education in the world dedicated entirely to the preservation and development of Indigenous arts, intellectual traditions, and cultures - a tribally-controlled college - The Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

The Indigenous-centered college of contemporary Indigenous arts and cultures is one of thirty-five other tribal colleges in the U.S., collectively serving over 30,000 students annually. The Institute of American Indian Arts, enjoying a rare political and economic circumstance with a Federal mandate embedded in its charter, was established almost fifty years ago and serves hundreds of students annually, all representing a multiplicity of distinct tribal nations from across the U.S. and Canada.

I speak to you today, in brief, about this unique, visionary, and vital center of Indigenous higher education because, firstly, its special mission and its specific architecture are my heart. . .but they are also an explicit representation of the implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and one of the fullest articulations of Indigenous maintained and controlled education, self-determination, Indigenous autonomy, and Indigenous cultural, intellectual, and creative freedom.

I encourage and welcome you, with an open heart, to the campus of the Institute of American Indian Arts and ask you to visit us in cyber space at [www.iaia.edu](http://www.iaia.edu).

And though I can only speak very briefly on it because my time is short, I am choosing carefully to highlight one of the single most undeniable and explicit articulations, among the many powerful, measurable, and substantive ways, in which the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples' inestimable power and possibility is being fully realized, utilized, incorporated, and implemented by Indigenous peoples in the U.S., in order to promote and protect our fundamental human rights.

The newly drafted Native Land Law Project Draft General Principles of Law Pertaining to Native Land and Natural Resources, drafted by the Indian Law Resource Center, with support provided by the Indian Land Tenure Foundation, is a profoundly illuminating indicator of what is possible in terms of re-affirming our human rights, by understanding, re-imagining, and incorporating the articles of the UNDRIP into, existing legal frameworks.

The draft principles at their essence propose, and begin the early constitution of, a bold new legal framework and a visionary new, more workable, model for the legal, political, and economic relationship between the United States government and its Indigenous peoples, with

international human rights standards and the UNDRIP as a normative legal framework for future legal reform, particularly in the realm of Federal Indian law, but also suggesting a visionary new model for the UNDRIPS' implementation, potentially applicable in a global context and potentially impacting Indigenous populations all over the world.

The draft principles in their entirety can be found at [www.indianlaw.org](http://www.indianlaw.org).

Please read and re-read them. I regard these draft principles as a sacred text and I hope you will also.

Lastly, I've been asked to share these words with you from a young Indigenous leader from the U.S., Justin Finkbonner, a brother from the Lummi Nation, "the canoe requires total synchrony and harmony by the spirits of the pullers. Once achieved, the old ones tell us, the canoe will lift off the water and float over the seas."

I thank you for receiving this. I thank you for your work.  
Dahwaahēh. Gumeh.

Courage for the work coming, my brothers and sisters.